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SAN DIEGO

BOND IMAGE ISN'T OPERATIVE AT SPY CONVENTION

In 25 years with the CIA, Hans Moses never carried a gun or met a double agent on a secluded street corner and rarely left his office..

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He worked clerk's hours in Germany, writing reports on the Soviet military and economy, based on information someone else compiled.

"If I were to look at myself from the outside, I guess I wouldn't find it terribly interesting," Moses said. "If it sounds dry, it's because it was."

In fact, dry is a good word for the Association of Former Intelligence Officers convention that was held in San Diego over the weekend.

The soft-spoken men in three-piece suits or blazers were reluctant to talk about the "company" without government clearance, although some said they were so dull that their stories would give American espionage a bad name.

They had business meetings, board of directors sessions, banquets and panel discussions on issues such as the need for closer cooperation with the academic community.

"This is not some kind of spies reunion," said John Greaney, executive director of the organization. "We're here to conduct business and have constructive discussions on issues that affect the intelligence community."

The association was founded in 1975 by a group of former intelligence officers who were disturbed by House and Senate subcommittees investigating intelligence operations.

The organization, which hopes to counteract "bad publicity," offers its services to congressional committees, testifies on legislative proposals and provides speakers to civic and academic groups.

When conventioneers gathered to drink and talk shop at the end of the day, Col. Carl Eifler drew an attentive circle.

Eifler, reverently referred to as "The Deadliest Colonel," was commander of Detachment 101, the first unit of the Office of Strategic Services, which was the forerunner of both the CIA and the Green Berets.

When a soldier joined the elite Detachment 101 during World War II, Eifler handed the graduate a stiletto.

The detachment's motto was "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer."

The 240-pound, 6-foot-2 Eifler told of World War II schemes to spirit scientists out of foreign countries, assassinate enemy leaders, rescue grounded flyers behind enemy lines, and foment revolutions.

"I broke every law of God and man, but I never did anything for personal gain," Eifler said. "I was out to win a war for my country, and you can't fight a lawful war...I think the CIA today has gotten a lot of bad publicity. Where do you want them to get information? From churches?"